Assignment Two

**Knowledge Application: Scenario 3 - Sando**

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for

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Sando is a male Junior High School student that has migrated to Australia within the last 3-5 years, nationality undetermined. Both his parents have limited English aptitude; however, have a high school equivalent level education. “Sando is from a non-English speaking background. Some teachers complain that he won’t speak in class or look at them, and he puts very little effort into tests and assignments. Other students like him, and he can be a clown in the school yard. He produced accurate scale drawings before making a model boat in woodwork.” Through this scenario, both concerns and opportunities can be identified in this student, Sando.

As with all students, the experience of students that come from a non-English speaking background are varied, however some issues continue to appear consistently. Beyond the issue of learning another language, in this case English, is the student attempting to learn the content at the same time. This creates a compounding effect for the student to learn up to or more than twice the content of their English-speaking colleagues. Further, it is often the case that students that come from a non-English speaking background also come with different cultural norms. Whilst many of these are accepted, within civilised societies, the lack of understanding and familiar behaviours at school becomes daunting. These factors can cause students to feel isolated and induce behaviour that is not conducive to good learning practices.

Whilst spoken language plays a seemingly central role in communication and society, body language plays an equally important part of that communication, not in the least in the eyes. As with spoken language, the eyes, dependant on your culture, have their own and distinctive language. In various cultural settings young people do not look directly at the faces or into the eyes of people in positions of authority, such as teachers, as a sign of respect. Direct eye contact, even in western society can be seen as a challenge to authority, disrespectful or mischievousness. This may be why Sando has been identified by teachers for not looking at them (Uono & Hietanen, 2015). In order to best assess reasons why Sando behaves in this manner, the teachers and educators must also understand his cultural background and their norms.

Another explanation to Sando’s aversion to eye contact and speaking to teachers is that Sando may have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It is typical of people with ASD to avoid direct eye contact. If Sando has ASD, whilst not cause for alarm, must be diagnosed appropriately to ensure correct treatment and specialised teaching outcomes are delivered, to enable learning (Madipakkam, 2017). Further, whilst Sando’s age is not explained in the scenario, early diagnosis of young children with severe ASD can help to significantly improve behavioural and cognitive development outcomes later in life (Moore & Goodson, 2003).

Speaking a language other than your mother tongue is challenging, particularly when trying to learn. The reservation of Sando to speak in class is possibly through his reservation and reluctance to make mistakes. This behaviour can be extended toward his low perceived effort to tests and assignments. Whilst it is important to educate students about the importance of failing or making mistakes, this maybe too culturally divisive for Sando to overcome. In this case, one on one or smaller group language development is important for Sando to overcome his reservation to speak and allow him to participate more actively during class.

Low perceived effort to test and assignments may also be due to the lack of context or relevance to this individual student’s situation. Depending on how the tests and assignments are designed and delivered, Sando may fail to see the relevance to his learning, progression and circumstances, that inhibits his motivation to complete the task to a higher standard.

To mitigate this issue, the use of learning maps, for example from 8 Ways may be used to illustrate how the content that is being taught or explored in the short-term effects and guide students toward more specified or contextually relevant content matter in the future (8 WAYS, n.d.). Learning maps can be distributed by the teacher, can be developed by the class or by the individual student. Through the third option, the teacher may be able to gain a better understanding of what motivates Sando’s education and develop more critical methods to ensure Sando is not left behind, due to the non-English speaking background. Additionally, it may trigger Sando to engage more deeply with his own learning process and journey, as he will have greater ownership and relative context.

Sando’s reported ability to produce accurate scale drawings before completing a model boat in woodwork, leads me to believe his aptitude for conceptualising ideas and reproduction of those ideas is high. It is possible that Sando relies on physical development of his ideas to be able to fully understand them. This key piece of information on his behaviour can be used to maximise his learning by relating it to similar concepts. This may be through identifying other interests within the industrial technologies and using that interest to encourage further language acquisition. A project based on his interest in building model boats may be expanded to include an explanation or presentation of his work and how it developed. Depending on the depth of his English comprehension and reservation to speak in class, this part of the activity can take a number of forms. These may be through written presentation with diagrams to aid explanation, giving the presentation in small groups, just to a teacher or to a voice recorder, to be listened to at another time, removing the immediate embarrassment of making errors during a presentation.

Academic achievement is influenced by a number of factors, however principally by immediate social interactions (Chen, 2005). Sando’s social interaction with family, peers and schooling are critical to his education and integration to the schooling system. Critically, the perspective and opinion of his parents and other close familial role models will form the basis for his own opinion of education. Particularly the student’s persistence to continue with aspirations of completing higher education and, as far as, career development. (Tate, et al., 2015) Further, the expectation of the parents for their child to succeed has a significant influence on the student’s self-expectation to achieve at school and then through a career. Whilst this parenting method does not typically foster nurturing intra-familial relationships, rather develop internalised coping methods, is does tend to yield higher academic achievement results and more prosperous and socially revered careers (Leung & Shek, 2019).

Sando’s interaction with other students seems typical of a young adolescent. His actions that lead me to believe he wants to fit in with other students, by “being the class clown”. Whilst this may not be the only behaviour that makes him likable, on its own could be concerning to his social development. Sando’s behaviour needs to be considered as a whole, rather than individual traits or occurrences. If his behaviour is considered to be attention seeking, where being the class clown is one of many or the main behaviour that is exhibited, it may be important to discourage this type of behaviour through direct conversation or subtle intervention.

Sando’s family background it critical to his education and its importance to him. Australian children benefit from having child aged siblings, that is from one to twelve years of age, whilst Iranian children were found to have no benefit (Shahaeian, et al., 2014). Iranian families, culturally, are more concerned with what food is healthier than what a child wants to eat, therefore are less likely to ask, “what do you want?” than Australian parents. This shows and conforms to the findings that Iranian culture is more concerned with community relationships and interpersonal relationships. This was also found that Western children were encouraged by their families to discuss, debate and openly challenge each other or ideas. This difference in a cultural practice also needs to be considered to allow students to integrate or assimilate with a new environment. This is an example of the contrast between cultures and how it can affect the outsider.

There is some evidence to suggest that older siblings will inadvertently teach or provide guidance to their younger siblings. The actions of an older sibling to be a unique agent of cognitive development is particularly prevalent within non-western cultures however is not entirely exclusive of them (Azmitia & Hesser, 1993). It was found that the siblings, within a specified teaching context, were able to provide more influential delivery of an explanation than the learner’s peers. Further, learners that received greater influence from and older sibling tests higher than learners that received the explanations from peers. Whilst the influence and effect of being taught by an older sibling was found to be more beneficial than from a peer, it was also found that receiving learning content from a peer was also significantly beneficial to the learner.

Whilst it is unclear if Sando has any siblings, either younger or older, it may be safe to assume that they are unlikely to provide a significant influence on Sando’s development and education. If this is that case, it may be useful to pair Sando with another student in his class or a year level above, to provide peered guidance. This would also have the potential to capitalise on his desire to be likeable and his likeable personality.

Another strategy to confront social development is to address the issues directly with his family. With regard to the above, if Sando has an older sibling, it may be useful to identify whether or not that sibling is suitable to provide mentorship to Sando. Further it is critical to identify the opinion of his parents regarding the education system and the importance of Sando’s education. The influence of a child’s parents on their perspective, not only toward education, but greater society and the world, cannot be underestimated (Acharya & Joshi, 2009). Whilst their proficiency of the English language is not expected to be high, the importance they place on their own and their child or children’s education will be a critical piece of information to be able to address Sando’s learning needs. By involving and including a student’s parents in the learning plan, they are able to take greater responsibility, as they were part of the planning process, therefore own the plan and the path to a solution. Whilst the majority of the learning and development will occur at school, without the parents present, this action provides another layer to help guide students through their personalised learning journey.

Regarding Indigenous students, specifically, it has been made clear that many students with parents that have experience trauma, either personally or through familial connections, are much more cautious and distrustful of the education system. This has a clear and well-established effect on these students, that educators and/or society are in a continuous struggle to keep Indigenous people contained or repressed. Again, this issue is less likely to effect Sando directly, however his school colleagues may hold these opinions and influence Sando’s opinion.

The issues raised and assumptions made for this scenario, with regard to Sando, do not amount to significant concern for this educational needs or development. There are however a number of areas that must be addressed to ensure that he does not become a significant challenge for educators and require greater resources and attention in the future. His language development can be attributed to a recent migration from a non-English speaking country, thus will require specialised education to ensure he is at the level required to participate satisfactorily level, in order to be able to comprehend the content being taught.

There are an almost limitless number of reasons, causes, internal and external influences that may be affecting Sando’s behaviour and development. These must each be dealt with carefully and, if necessary, by an appropriate professional. Many of the issues discussed above are able to be investigated by an educator or school staff, which may then result in some form of intervention, most likely through the development of an individualised learning and behaviour plan. What may be critical for students like Sando is authentic engagement by students with the aid and support of educators, the education system and family and peers or colleagues.

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